

# VICTOR VITO AND FREDDIE VASCO

BY LAURIE BERKNER

## CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS

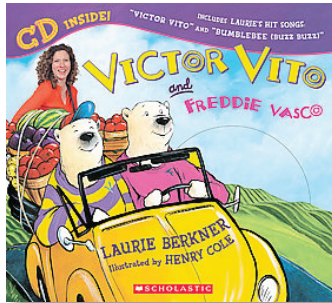
**Kinder:** Reading I.17 Identify and sort common words in basic categories (e.g., colors, shapes, foods). I.18 Describe common objects and events in both general and specific language. Reading Comp 2.2 Use pictures and context to make predictions about story content.

**Grade One:** Reading Comp 2.2 Respond to who, what, when, where, and how questions. 2.3 Follow one-step written instructions. Reading Comp 2.6 Relate prior knowledge to textual information.

**Grade Two:** Reading Comp 2.4 Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition [e.g., why, what if, how]. Reading Comp 2.5 Restate facts and details in the text to clarify and organize ideas. Reading Comp 2.7 Interpret information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.

**Grade Three:** Reading Comp 2.2 Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text. 2.3 Demonstrate comprehension by identifying answers in the text. 2.4 Recall major points in the text and make and modify predictions about forthcoming information.

**Grade Four:** Reading Comp 2.1 Identify structural patterns found in informational text (e.g., compare and contrast, cause and effect, sequential or chronological order, proposition and support) to strengthen comprehension. 2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment).



GRADES: K - 4

READING LEVEL: 2.3

OBJECTIVES: 1. Recognize that regional differences exist in U.S. foods. 2. Identify regions described in the book, and connect them to foods (vegetables) representative of these regions. 3. Determine 3 vegetables grown in California.

## ABOUT THIS LESSON...

*Dr. Sidney Mintz, an Anthropologist, once said, "There is no American food. When we begin to list American foods, either we talk about regional things like lobster or shrimp Creole, or we talk about spaghetti and pizza and hot dogs...One could argue it's what makes us great. The fact that we don't have a cuisine is a measure of our democracy and of our ethnic heterogeneity."*

*American cuisine can be summed up with two words: "regional" and "diverse." Nothing shows this more than traveling across the country. Every town and city has its unique food traditions and establishments that combine local traditions and diverse influence from around the globe. The journey of Victor Vito and Freddie Vasco is a song "set to story" that is a fun way to help familiarize students to regional cuisine.*

## DIFFERENT FOODS, SAME COUNTRY?

Read the story (if desired, the Victor and Freddie song can also be played). Discuss the foods Victor and Freddie discovered on their road trip. Which ones have they heard of before? Which ones are new to them? Which ones are vegetables (rutabagas, collard greens, spaghetti (tomato) sauce).

Ask students why they think there are different kinds of food in different parts of the United States. What might account for the differences? Brainstorm a list of ideas including: immigration, interactions between different cultures, crops that grow well in an area, etc.

Explain that the cultures of the people who live in an area and the resources available to them often influence the food traditions of a region. Give

Parts of lesson taken and adapted from *Key Ingredients: America by Food*, Smithsonian Institution, 2003.

This material was funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program through the California Department of Public Health, Network for a Healthy California. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help buy nutritious foods for a better diet. For information on the Food Stamp Program, call (323) 727-4542. Contract # 06-55103.



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## LESSON CONT.

examples (e.g., the interaction of French settlers and African slaves in Louisiana gave rise to Creole cooking, and the prevalence of hog raising in the South after the Civil War made pork the meat of choice for barbecue). For a brief review of regional foods in the U.S., refer to [www.sallys-place.com/food/cuisines/us.htm](http://www.sallys-place.com/food/cuisines/us.htm).

### FOLLOW THE TRAVELS OF VICTOR AND FREDDIE

Using the enclosed activity, have students cut out the new foods that Victor and Freddie are now featuring at the Klondike Cafe, and paste them next to the regions of the U.S. in which they learned about them. Are these foods also eaten in California? Yes! Due to its climate, California produces much produce. Furthermore, we are so diverse in our population that essentially all types of foods are eaten here!

Talk about the cultural influence of the vegetables in the book (e.g., greens were a staple in most slave quarters and have become a beloved, tasty tradition in the South; tomatoes were embraced in Italian and Spanish food after Spanish conquistadors carried seeds back from the Aztecs in South America).

Discuss MyPyramid and categorize the foods in the story using a Tree Map®. If students were to have a meal, what foods would they eat? To make it a balanced meal, what foods would they add? (Something from the milk and fruit groups).

### THE KLONDIKE CAFE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The new foods brought back to the Klondike Cafe were such a hit that Victor and Vito need help... they want to add more regional foods from the U.S. to their menu!

**OPTION 1:** Students can offer the Klondike Cafe a taste of California. What California foods would they suggest they add? Since our state is so diverse, there are many choices. Have them recommend a California fruit or vegetable (and how to prepare it), along with either a food from California history (e.g., California mission foods, the Gold Rush era); a food representing immigrants and settlers (e.g., Chinese, Italian, Mexican, etc.); or California foods like smoothies, California rolls, or sourdough bread. Invite students to develop a menu featuring California foods for Victor and Freddie's Alaskan cafe.

**OPTION 2:** Students can also explore other regional foods to recommend for the Cafe. Divide the class into groups, assign each group a state/region, and ask them to create a menu after researching the food traditions of that state/region. Groups can utilize reference materials in the school/local library, like local recipe books from their assigned state (e.g., the *Smithsonian Folklife Festival Cookbook*). Students can also consult websites maintained by their state agricultural boards; the "500 Years of American Food" section of the Key Ingredients website ([www.keyingredients.org](http://www.keyingredients.org)); and the "State Foods" section of The Food Timeline ([www.foodtimeline.org/statefoods.html](http://www.foodtimeline.org/statefoods.html)). Afterwards, they can develop a menu featuring their food traditions.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Design place mats for the Klondike Cafe decorated with Victor and Freddie's vegetables.
- Investigate ways collard greens, rutabagas, and tomatoes are consumed.
- Have students select their favorite vegetable and draw/describe an imaginary "road trip" to the area(s) of California and/or the U.S. where this vegetable is grown.
- Build a Tree Map® of "America by food." Using websites listed at the end of this lesson for help, identify and organize foods characteristic of states/regions in the U.S.



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spaghetti



rice



beans



burrito



rutabagas

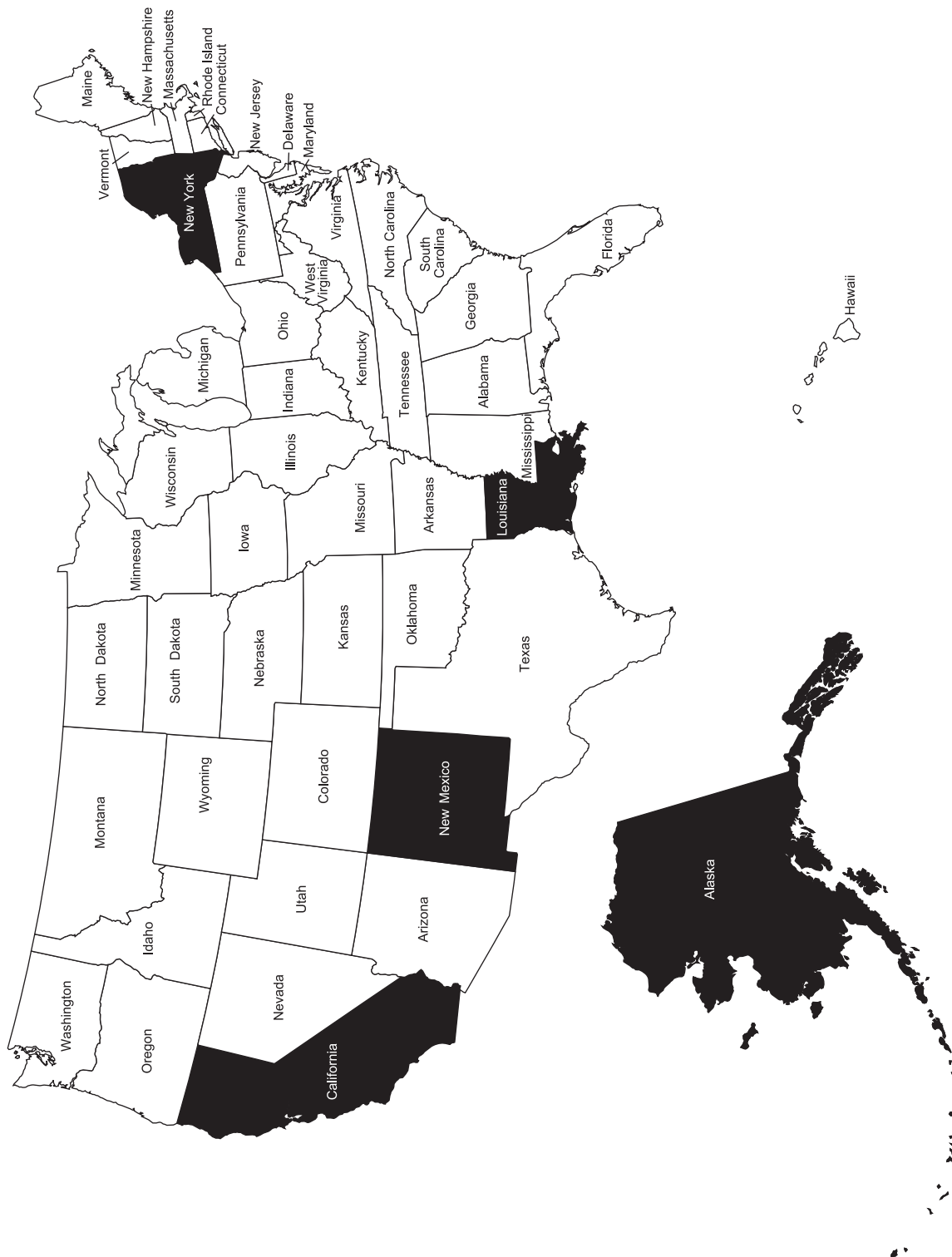


collard greens



tabasco sauce

# FOLLOW THE TRAVELS OF VICTOR AND FREDDIE



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